

Volunteer Development Playbook

March 22, 2015

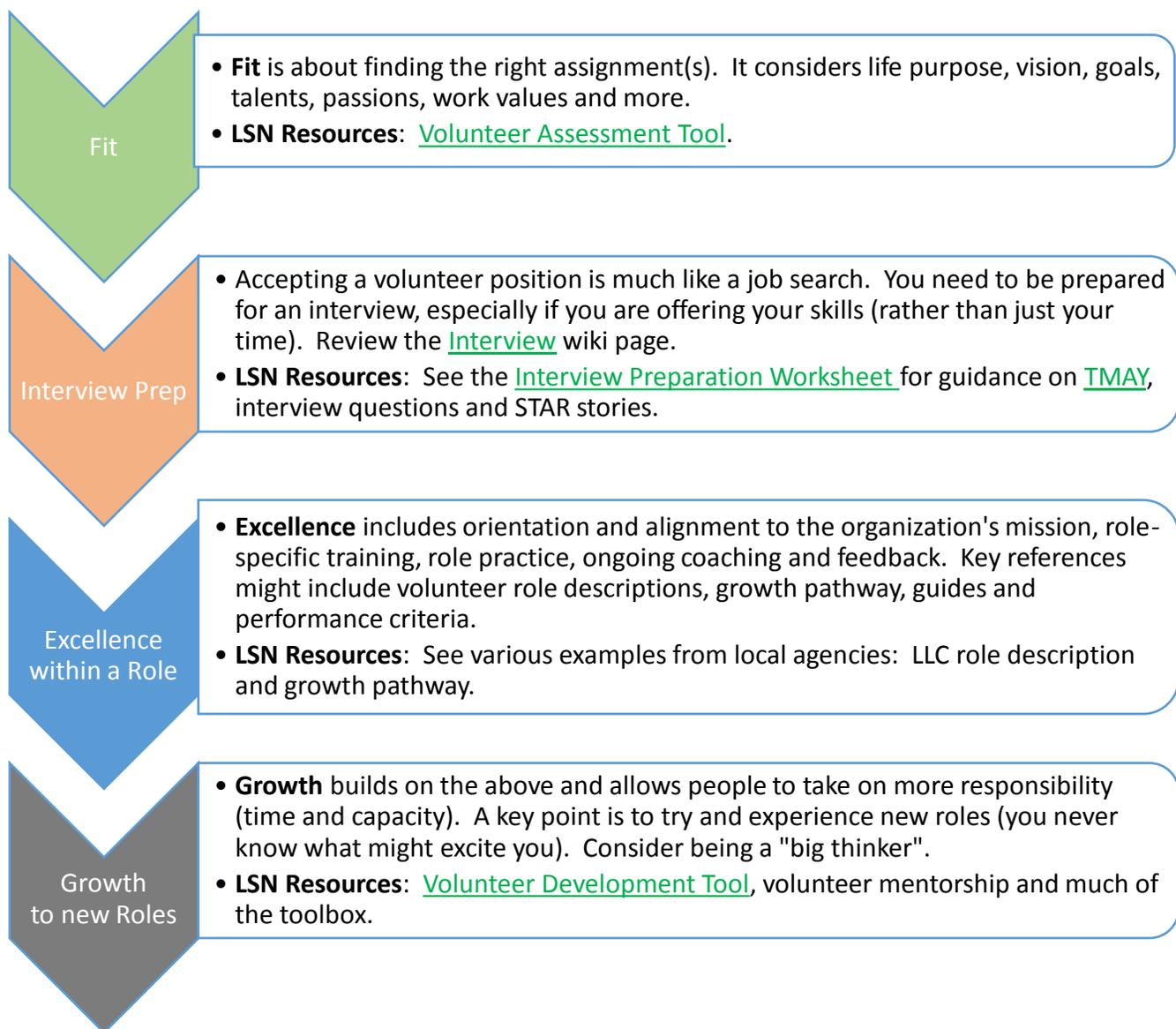
Tony Aloise



Definition: Volunteer development is the process of finding the right assignment (fit), insuring excellence within a role and allowing individuals to grow to their potential. A premise is that life purpose directs the leveraging of personal strengths and unique skills.

Discussion: This playbook can be applied in two ways: 1) *"I, as the volunteer, can direct my future"* or 2) a mentor or agency volunteer leader provides coaching. The goal is to stimulate thinking that causes a person to want to use their full potential. It assumes that the individual is directing their future much like they might in career planning in a work context.

The [Skill-Based Volunteerism](#) wiki page provides additional helpful perspective.



Volunteer Assessment (Fit) Worksheet

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Personal Needs. What are your personal needs or values that you'd like to satisfy? Examples: Physical things (sports), intellectual things (projects, teaching), emotional things (grief), spiritual things. Indoors/outdoors.

Passions. What are your passions? What "causes" that get you excited? Examples: Poverty, career, parenting, mental health, environment, sports, politics.

Skills. What are your key skills, strengths and unique talents? Examples: Communications (listening, presenting, writing), selling, project management, building things.

What kind of people do you like to be with? Examples: Young children, teens, adults, elderly, men/women.

Do you have a defined life purpose? If yes, write it. If no, see Life Purpose wiki. How is this directing you?

How far from home are you willing to travel? Ideally, your volunteer opportunity is close to home.

What is your availability? Consider days of the week, time of day and hours per week.

Previous volunteer experiences? What did you like or not like about previous volunteer experiences?

What volunteer options are you already considering? What is your starter list of potential activities? Brainstorm. Rate them 1, 2, 3 based on satisfying your needs, skills, passion, purpose and location. Why did you rate them in that order?

Would it be helpful to talk with a volunteer "mentor"? Yes/no.

Volunteer Interview Preparation

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Searching for and accepting a volunteer position, especially if you are offering your [skills](#), is similar to the job search process. You need to come prepared.

TMAY: Tell Me About Yourself, sometimes called an “elevator speech”, is your 30 second, focused introduction. It includes your experience, strengths and reason why you are a good fit.

- **Example:** *Hi, I’m _____, a retiree and active volunteer. I love to teach and manage projects to enable others to live to their potential and purpose. I have experience coaching at work and as a parent. I have developed training materials at _____ to enable teens to prosper. I am a good fit for your organization because my skills and time availability can help you deliver your mission.*
- See the [TMAY Worksheet](#).

Typical Interview Questions: While you can never predict the questions that will be asked, you can prepare yourself with some key points to use. Here are some examples:

• Why do you want to volunteer at ___? What positions interest you?	
• What skills and experiences prepare you for the ___ role?	
• Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult person. How did you handle it?	
• What are your strengths? How do you think you can use them here?	

See this [link](#) for many other interview questions with answers.

Star Stories:

- People like hearing stories, facts are easier to remember if wrapped in a story, stories tend not to get interrupted; basically stories are an ancient proven method of getting a message across!
- STAR Stories use a formula to share the Situation/Task, Action and Result. Click [here](#) to read and prepare.

Other Tips:

- A resume is helpful but not usually necessary; you can offer it though. Consider a summary sheet with your work and volunteer experiences that relate to the volunteer position you are seeking.
- Applications get your foot in the organization's door but now YOU are the product and you need a marketing mindset. We help sell ourselves by making a good first impression (appearance and demeanor) then energetically using our conversation, body language and positive attitude to convince the organization that we are the right person for the job. See the [Presenting Yourself](#) wiki page.

Volunteer Development Worksheet

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This tool is intended for the “big thinkers”. Those who want to live life to their potential and contribute a significant amount of time to volunteering.

Life Purpose	
•	
Life Vision	Life Goals
•	•
Strengths	Work Values
•	•
Volunteer Objective	Volunteer Goals
•	•
Volunteer Management Elements	Volunteer Management Actions
<u>Personal:</u>	
<i>Good Work</i> ...deliver results, innovate	•
<i>Skill Acquisition</i> ...learn essential skills to move ahead	•
<u>External:</u>	
<i>Visibility</i> ...get noticed	•
<i>Networking</i> ...meet influential people	•
<i>Mentoring/Sponsorship</i> ...get advice and advocacy	•
Reflection	
•	